

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 182

By Watson

A RESOLUTION to honor Louis H. Erwin for his distinguished military service as a member of the United States Navy during World War II.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Tennessee have, throughout the years, been called upon to take up arms against the enemies of this great nation, risking their lives and leaving their loved ones behind to honorably safeguard the freedoms and liberties guaranteed to all citizens of these United States and vanquishing those who threaten our way of life; and

WHEREAS, while the heroic deeds of Tennesseans have been extolled throughout the history of our state and nation, the distinguished military service of each and every proud Tennessean should be illuminated, shared, and properly honored, especially those honorable military veterans who served during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Louis Erwin is one such individual who ably served this country and the United States Navy as a Coxswain during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Erwin was a Coxswain aboard the *USS Indianapolis* for more than two years. He was responsible for the five-inch guns the ship carried; and

WHEREAS, during his service aboard the *USS Indianapolis*, the Portland-class cruiser and her crew participated in eight major battles, earning ten Battle Stars for the ship. It was damaged in the Battle of Okinawa, and was later chosen to carry out the top-secret mission of delivering parts of the atomic bomb to the Tinian Islands; and

WHEREAS, on July 30, 1945, at fourteen minutes past midnight, the ship was struck by torpedoes fired by a Japanese submarine. The ship sank in twelve minutes with three hundred still aboard. Of the nearly nine hundred sailors who were able to make it into the water, only 316 survived the next four days at sea; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Erwin and his crewmates were in the water for four days and five nights before being rescued, during which time more than five hundred were lost to saltwater delusions, exposure to the elements, sharks, and injuries from the torpedo blast. Louis Erwin, who went into the water with only his kapok vest, survived and recovered from his injuries over the next month at a hospital in Guam; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Erwin was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1946; and

WHEREAS, while no offering can properly relay our gratitude for his bravery in combat and his dedication to preserving the blessed freedom that is inseparable from our American heritage and ideals, it is most appropriate that we should honor Louis Erwin to the full extent of our ability, as he has made untold and innumerable sacrifices to preserve the liberties we enjoy today and that our progeny will hopefully continue to cherish for generations to come; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Louis H. Erwin for his military service during World War II, applaud his dedication and bravery, and extend our best wishes for his continued success and happiness in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.